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Dr D F Dennison
Headteacher
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Dear Dr Dennison

Ofsted 2011–12 subject survey inspection programme: physical education (PE)

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of the staff and students, during my visit on 6 and 7 June 2011 to look at work in PE.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; observation of five lessons and an extra-curricular activity.

The overall effectiveness of PE is outstanding.

Achievement in PE

Achievement in PE is outstanding.

- Students make rapid gains in improving performance. Many develop outstanding leadership, coaching and officiating skills and use these to support school and community sporting activities. Students are highly confident when evaluating performance and helping one another to improve. They develop a very secure understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and the proportion of students involved in extra-curricular sporting activities is well above the national average.
- Students have excellent attitudes to PE and sport. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They cooperate exceedingly well and discuss activities sensibly, solving problems and investigating different approaches, for example, to baton changing in relay racing.

- Students' achievement in GCSE PE and sport is outstanding and results are consistently high. Achievement at A level is good with an overall rising trend of attainment.
- A high number of teams and individuals compete and succeed at local, county and, on occasion, national level. Gifted and more able students have many opportunities to succeed and are well supported by staff. Students identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers and are well supported. Those at risk of disaffection often benefit from regular involvement in school sporting activities.

Quality of teaching in PE

The quality of teaching in PE is outstanding.

- Excellent relationships between staff and students establish a positive atmosphere in lessons conducive to rapid learning. Students respond very positively to teachers' high expectations and enjoy lessons a great deal.
- Teachers' outstanding subject knowledge is evident in clear explanations and probing questions that develop students' understanding. Teachers plan tasks that meet students' differing needs and ensure that learning takes place in manageable yet challenging steps. Lessons ensure good levels of physical activity and a good pace to learning.
- Students have a clear understanding of the purpose of lessons and how they can succeed at different levels because clear learning objectives are shared with them and referred to frequently to guide their progress. Occasionally, opportunities to draw on students' prior experiences, at the start of lessons, are missed.
- Students have frequent opportunities to observe and evaluate performance. Occasionally, there is too little emphasis on feeding back the positive features of performance and opportunities are sometimes missed to ensure that students understand the principles behind techniques being taught.

Quality of the curriculum in PE

The quality of the curriculum in PE is outstanding.

- A wide range of activities meets students' needs exceptionally well. The 2008 curriculum has been fully embraced and is ensuring that they develop the capabilities to take on a broad range of roles within sport. Limitations of the timetable have restricted opportunities to develop different pathways of learning and interest from Year 9.
- A good range of accredited courses in Key Stages 4 and 5 includes excellent leadership opportunities. In addition to A level in Key Stage 5, vocational opportunities are being increased.
- An outstanding programme of extra-curricular activities enables students to succeed in a wide variety of sports. The school sport partnership has

contributed significantly to increasing the range of activities so that more students are involved in healthy physical activity and competition.

Effectiveness of leadership and management in PE

The effectiveness of leadership and management in PE is outstanding.

- Highly enthusiastic and committed leadership is well focused on raising achievement, providing high-quality worthwhile experiences for every student and is well informed of current developments within the subject.
- Leadership sets high expectations of staff and students. Rigorous monitoring of students' progress and the quality of provision ensures a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop and leads to well-focused development planning and professional development.
- Links with the school sport partnership and local providers are highly effective in broadening the curriculum provision and supporting achievement for a wide range of students.
- Extensive use of the schools sports facilities by local clubs and groups makes a highly significant contribution to the local community. A high proportion of students from the school make good use of the facilities out-of-school hours.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that more lessons are outstanding by achieving greater consistency in:
 - using the start of lessons to question students on what they already know and understand about the topics to be taught
 - encouraging students to recognise the successful features of each other's performance as well as the areas for improvement
 - developing students' knowledge and understanding not only of techniques but of the principles that underpin them
- considering ways that enable students to follow pathways of learning and interests earlier than at the start of Year 10.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop PE in the school.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. Except in the case of academies, a copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Salter-Smith
Additional inspector